

and partly crossing high steep
 promontories which jut
 out into the lake. A few villages, where
 strips of level
 ground and water for irrigation can be
 obtained, are
 passed, and among them the village of
 Vastan, the "Seat
 of Government" for the district, and a Turkish
 telegraph
 station, but in the eleventh century the
 residence of the
 Armenian royal family of Ardzrauni.

Art aids nature, and there are grand old
 monasteries
 on promontories, and Kurdish castles on
 heights, and
 flashing streams and booming torrents are
 bridged by
 picturesque pointed arches. There are 150
 monasteries
 in this region, and the towers of St.
 George at the
 mountain village of Narek, high on a rocky
 spur above
 one of the most beautiful of the many
 wooded valleys
 which descend upon the lake of Van, lend
 an air of
 medieval romance to a scene as fair as
 nature can make
 it. Nearly all the romantic valleys opening
 on the lake
 are adorned with one or more -villages, with
 houses tier
 above tier in their rocky clefts, and terrace
 below terrace
 of exquisite cultivation below, of the vivid
 velvety green
 of winter wheat. These terraces often
 "hang" above
 green sward and noble walnut trees.
 Occasionally the
 villages are built at the feet of the mountains,
 on small
 plateaux above steep-sided bays, and are
 embosomed in
 trees glowing with colour, from canary-yellow
 to crimson
 and madder-red, and mountains, snow-
 crested and forest-
 skirted tower over all. Lake Van, bluer than
 the blue
 heavens, with its huge volcanic heights—

Sipan Dagħ, and Nimrud Dagħ, and Varak Dagħ, and their outlying ranges—its deep green bays and quiet wooded inlets; its islets, some like the Bass Rock, others monastery-covered ; its pure green shadows and violet depths; its heavy boats with their V-shaped sails; and its auburn oak-covered slopes, adds its own enchantment, and all is as fair as fair can be.